

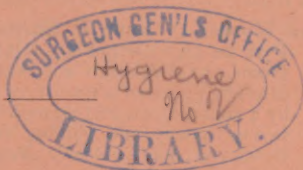
HAMPTON TRACTS

FOR THE PEOPLE

SANITARY SERIES No. IV.

Who Found Jamie?

✓
BY HELEN W. LUDLOW



NEW YORK

Published for the Hampton Tract Committee

By G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS

182 FIFTH AVENUE

1879

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WHO FOUND JAMIE?

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The door bell rang.

That was not an uncommon occurrence, as you may imagine, at No. 1, Rivington Square, an uptown, city boarding-house with a doctor's office in the basement. So I don't know why a sudden impulse of feminine curiosity should have stopped me on my way upstairs, and made me look back over my shoulder, through the opening door.

Feminine curiosity, however, was for once justified. A picture for a painter was framed in the doorway. It held me suspended between the first and second floors.

Just a pretty little Irish woman, with a pretty bit of a baby in her arms.

It was the baby that did it, I know:—gave the mother's shoulder that tender droop, with the faded shawl dropping from it in a few artistic folds, pushed the rusty bonnet back out of sight, and laid its own red-riding-hood and flower-like face against the black locks straying over her eyes; while winter roses blossomed on the brown cheeks below, and the dainty ones above; and the slow-falling November snow, and gray pavements dimly showing through it, made a soft-tinted background for all.

“An' is the Docther at home?”

A voice like music. I turned, ran down stairs, and held out my hand.

"Ah! it is you, Mrs. McGuire. Come in. The doctor will be at home presently. Bring that baby in, out of the cold—the dear little dot!" and with another feminine impulse, I took it from its mother's arms and kissed it. I never *was* proof against a clean, sweet baby, and this was dainty enough for any one to kiss.

Besides, little Mrs. McGuire was an old pensioner of ours. Some sympathetic, out-giving souls have a way, you know, of attracting to themselves all the odds and ends of humanity. I always told *my* "beloved physician" that his sign ought to read,

"Come ye disconsolate."

At any rate, they came all the same as if it did, and this was one of the best of them; that is to say, the most needy—not so much of silver and gold, as of general advice and comfort, and human cheer, which the richest are not always rich in. For this she had come to us often in the five years since the stormy night when Hugh found her nearly frozen in the streets, flying from her old husband's abuse and drunken rage, turned out of doors with her baby to die.

Perhaps philosophers will be able to tell us some day what it is that can keep alive the tenderness in a woman's heart for a brute like this; old enough to be her father, with grown up children who hated her and stirred him up to hate her too, confirmed by age in every vice and hardness and roughness of nature. She would never leave him, but toiled on, harder than she ever would have had to alone, for the little children that blossomed in their unlovely home like wild roses out of the crevices of a rock. The romances of the poor are not gilt-edged, but they are rich in all the elements of human love and tragedy.

Since our first introduction to her, we had moved from the suburbs to the city, and had not seen her as frequently as before, though never quite losing sight of her. I thought to myself, What new trouble now? as I asked her in; but, before any questioning, I took her into the study and established her by the fire, hung her dripping shawl and limp bonnet to dry, and gave her a good hot cup of Hugh's own tea, as tenderly as I know he would himself, the pretty blue-eyed baby, which I had not seen before, supplying, meanwhile, a safe and pleasant topic of discussion. Then, after it had received its own appropriate consolation, and cooed itself to sleep in its poor little mother's arms, and been laid away on a rug on the lounge, I said:

"And what is it that has brought you so far this stormy day, Mrs. McGuire? You are as wet as if you had walked all the way."

"An' that's what I did, ma'am, ivery shtep, barrin' the ferry."

"What! Two whole miles—three miles with the other side? You don't mean to say that——"

"No, ma'am; he gave me the fare himself," she said, divining and turning aside my suspicion of some new outrageous demonstration on the part of her tyrant.

"But what then? That baby ought not to have been out so long in this weather—though it does look like a daisy. And you must be perfectly dragged out, carrying it! What is it?"

The winter roses had faded out of the brown cheeks, but a flush of excitement rose in their place as she looked at me. I noticed how thin the cheeks were, and how hollow and haggard the pleasant, deep blue, Irish eyes, heavy with unshed tears, and weary to exhaustion. She only said:

"It's Jamie, ma'am."

"Jamie? Is he sick? Oh, you don't mean he has run away again?"

"He has, ma'am. He's been away goin' on four months."

"Four months! You poor, poor woman! Why didn't you come and tell us sooner?"

She glanced at the sleeping baby.

"I couldn't, ma'am. I was very bad with the worry, and I couldn't iver get so far, till now."

It seemed cruel to search her grief further, but, with some hesitation, I said:

"It wasn't his father, this time, I hope."

Oh, think of it, you happy mothers who gather your babies about you every evening in the home nest, counting every silken head with joy, or, if your tearful eyes miss one beloved there, they can see it safe in the Father's fold above. Though your home be humble, and the common crust hard to get, if you have ever shed a tear of compassion for Charley Ross's mother, and, holding your little ones closer, thanked God that he has spared you her sorrow, thank him again tenfold that you have not had the tenfold anguish of knowing that your children's enemy was in their own home, the kidnapper to be dreaded and watched against, their own father.

When Jamie was scarcely five years old, his unnatural father, in a fit of anger against his wife, carried him off to spite her, and after keeping him all night in no one knows what dens of low drunkenness, came home without him. If it was true that time, as he declared when he woke from his heavy sleep, that he had not done it on purpose, having once discovered this original and effective means of torturing the poor little creature in

his power, he redeemed himself from any suspicion of a lack of purpose, by repeating it again and again. Three times in as many years, the child was thus carried off and dropped, like a forlorn little kitten, in the dark streets at night, not so far from home, fortunately, but that every time a friendly neighbor or the street watchman brought him back, pityingly, the next morning to the distracted mother.

But, whether from these infantile experiences of night revelries and sleeping under the stars on ash-heaps or area steps, the boy had acquired a love for street life, or was instigated to it by his father, or, more likely still, had inherited from him some perverse distortion of nature, as he grew older, he developed a fondness for wandering on his own account, and was fast becoming a little wild street Arab, restrained by small love for his long-suffering mother. He had been gone for a fortnight the last time, and when he came creeping back, dirty and ragged and half-starved, his mother, roused to unaccustomed energy, placed him in the safe keeping of the "Sisters" in a Roman Catholic reform-school.

So it was with some uncertainty that, surprised at his escape, I asked whether his father had helped him off.

"'Deed no, ma'am. The ould man has been pretty dacent to to me lately. An' I thought Jamie would get along all right at the Sisthers. I felt real safe about him. They were teaching him a trade, don't you see—hoop-skirt making—all the b'ys worked at it. He didn't like it very much; but it wasn't hard work, and he had enough to eat, an' they taught him his book, an' I wint to see him myself ivery week, visiting day, so he shouldn't get lonesome. Och! whin I wint up to see him—it was some time last May—an' they tould me he

had run away, you could have knocked me down wid a shtraw just, I was that weak."

"What did he run away for? How did he get away?"

"He got tired o' stayin' an' workin', an' he shpoke up right saucy to one of the Sisthers, an' threatened to run off, an' she gave him a whippin' for it. I don't suppose he got more than he deserved, but he never would take whippin' well. The ould man has beat him often, but I'd niver raised a han' to him, an' he wouldn't shtand it from a woman. So thin he wouldn't stay anyway, an' he got off that same night—got over the big high garden wall; however he did it I don't know, but he could do anythin' in climbin'."

"And you've never seen him since?"

"Oh yes, ma'am. He came shtealin' home that very night to me—watched his chance whin he saw his father go out. 'Och, Jamie!' says I, after I'd kissed him an' cried over him,—'however could you?' 'Don't say a word, mother,' says he; 'if you wout send me back, an' father'll promise not to beat me, I'll niver run away again; but I'll niver go back there alive,' says he—an' he just a little feller of ten years old, but he shpoke up as fierce as a man."

"Well, I gave him his supper, an' told him to go into the neighbors', till I'd shpeak to his father; an' so I did, an' the ould man was good natured, an' promised fair he'd niver lay a finger on him, an' no more he didn't. An' Jamie was just as good wid me, an' kind as iver you'd ashk or expict, an' shtayed around home, an' helped me wid the childer, an' ran on errands, an' always came back just as good. I thought all my troubles was over, ivery wan!"

"Now, Mrs. McGuire, you must stop just there, and take another cup of tea, and this hot beef broth Bridget

has brought you, and this toast, and I'll go out to lunch myself while she keeps you company, but you mustn't say a word more about your trouble till I come back. Perhaps the Doctor will be home himself by that time, and he will want to hear it too."

But he wasn't, and my feeling for him, toiling through the increasing storm on some distant errand of mercy, made me listen still more sympathetically to the rest of the poor little mother's sad story.

"Wasn't I tellin' you how good he was till me, ma'am? An' so he was---just like a little lamb. I took all the comfort in life wid him, and the ould man, him so clever, an' the childer well---ah! thim was the happy days! An' so it wint on till one mornin'---I think it was just about six weeks since I'd had him home, a Monday mornin'---I got the breakfast out of the way, an' the ould man off to his work, an' I got my tubs out an' thought I'd have my washin' done up in a hurry. An' I hadn't a bit of soap in the house, an' Jamie was takin' care of Mary Ellen and Johnny, makin' pictures for them, just as nice; an' I said, 'Jamie, I'll look afther the childer, till you run to the grocery an' fetch me a bar of soap,' says I. 'Yes, mother,' says he---just as cheerful---an' he got his cap, an' I gave him the six pin-nies, niver mishtrushtin' nothin'. Jamie niver did lift a cint off me: he was no thief: there wasn't a thievin' hair on him. 'Now run quick, Jamie dear,' says I. 'Yes, mother; I'll be back right off;' so he shouted to me from the shstreet, an' turned about an' smiled at me, so he did, an' swung his little cap, an' darted off like a flash; an' Johnnie a callin' afther him, an' me a shtandin' there in the doorway, smilin' an' thinkin' what a comfort he was, afther all.

"An' that---was---the last---minute---I've iver---set

eyes onto him—from that blessed day to this.”

She was not crying, poor, heart-broken mother, but I was, and I hope you are.

“Mrs. McGuire,” I said, at last, “Try to remember that the good Lord’s eye is on Jamie this very minute, and He can take even as loving care of him as his own mother could.”

“An’ why wouldn’t He be sendin’ him back till me thin? Doesn’t He see me too?”

Ah—why—who can answer such whys but Himself?

“What have you been doing about it yourself all these months?” I asked.

“It was two months an’ over before I was able to raise a hand about it meself. Whin he didn’t come, an’ I got frightened, I took Johnnie an’ Mary Ellen into the neighbors’, an’ wint round to the grocery—it wasn’t five minutes’ walk—an’ they told me they’d given him the soap, but hadn’t noticed whin he wint out—no more they wouldn’t, you know, ma’am, av course. An’ I looked about a bit for him, an’ thin I thought maybe he’d be home before me, an’ I wint back, but he wasn’t there. An’ I wint out again, but I couldn’t get no word of him. An’ whin the ould man came home for his dinner, there wasn’t any for him, an’ I didn’t care. I charged him with takin’ Jamie off, but he shwore he didn’t. An’ thin I wint out of me head like, an’ didn’t know much how things wint till afther baby came, poor little thing, an’ atther that I wasn’t able just to raise me head, not for two months, as I told you. The ould man seemed sorry, an’ kept pretty sober, an’ got his daughter to come an’ get the meals. He did what he could about it, I believe. He wint up for me to the Sisthers, but they hadn’t seen him there. An’ so it wint on, me hopin’ he’d come back, day afther day. He’d niver been gone so

long before. When I got able to walk, the neighbors were good an' had an eye to the childer, now an' thin, an' I wint out a little ivery day, lookin', till I got shtrong enough to go further an' carry the baby. Thin I just took her in my arms, an' came across to the city, an' walked an' walked till I knew I mustn't walk a shstep further if I iver wanted to get back. Many's the mile poor baby an' I has walked, lookin' an' lookin', but we've niver got as far as this before."

Ah—looking and looking—many a mile. How my heart followed the image that fancy called up, of the poor little woman and the baby born to sorrow, walking wearily, how wearily, through the long noisy streets of the great city so overpowering in its vastness, so lonely in its fullness, to a mother who seeks among its great, hopeless throngs for one little lost child!

Mile after mile, through the scorching summer days, over the blistering pavements that flashed back confusion to her bewildered brain; threading the noisome alleys where infection lurks and fevers are bred; where pallid faces crowd tenement house windows for a breath of air less foul than that within; where, every summer, hundreds of little children languish out of existence and escape so easily, thank God, from a life more corrupt than the grave itself, into the sweet air of Heaven. Mile after mile, through rattling business streets, down among the docks where the great ocean-steamers unload their rich freights; hogsheads of sugar and molasses oozing sweetness from every pore, and heaps of golden fruit from the Mediterranean, attracting the sly little human dock-rats, as well as the slyer brutes whose name they bear. Mile after mile, through the now deserted avenues of fashion, round and round the dusty parks that give the only glimpse of blessed country life to the

children of the poor; mile after hopeless mile of aimless wandering; rousing now and then to follow some slight fancied trail; tramping after an organ-grinder to watch the ragged, merry little crowd he drew; searching every knot of boys playing or quarreling on street corners; her heart leaping into her throat at the glimpse of some brown, curly head, or the ring of some boyish laugh that might be Jamie's—but, alas! was not. So many, many children in God's world, and had it no room anywhere for her one little lost lamb?

The little that seemed within the power of human aid I tried to do; giving her the fare home, and making her promise to use it, wrapping her and the baby warmer from the storm, though that was nearly over, and promising the Doctor's more efficient help and counsel when he should come home.

As we sat cozy and comfortable that night by the bit of open grate fire that Hugh, I am glad to say, always will indulge in, I told him the sad story in few words; and, in fewer still, his practical, common-sense kindness responded promptly, as I knew it would.

"The police stations must be notified at once. It ought to have been done at first. And I'll send a description of the case to the Children's Hospital, and House of Refuge, and to all the private asylums where such little waifs would naturally drift. If the poor soul wants to go herself to look, I'll give her letters and get passes for her. He's most likely safe in one of them, poor little scamp."

O Hugh, do you really think so?"

"Yes indeed, dear; there's little that escapes those nets."

Hugh went himself, the first thing next morning, to the nearest police station to give a minute description of

little Jamie and his disappearance, and instantly, from station to station round the great city, the message flashed, till the whole beneficent strength of the law's keen vision was focused upon this one little vagrant. The police officers shook their heads, however, over the length of time that had elapsed, and said,

"More chance at the Refuges."

Just as soon as the necessary passes could be obtained, we sent for Mrs. McGuire, and, with heart throbbing wild with feverish hope, she started upon the new trail among asylums and lodging-houses and hospitals. When it was possible, we went with her to make her reception surer, and her search easier. Ah, the thousands of homeless little ones in a great city; the hundreds of childish faces that passed before us, of all colors and nationalities! We walked till we were bewildered, through dining-rooms where they looked askance at us from their tin bowls of porridge; school-rooms where they looked down at us, like a cloud of doubtful cherubs, from tier after tier of seats rising against the wall; hospital wards where they looked up at us, patient and pitiful, from rows of little white beds, and sometimes even, mute and smiling, from rude little coffins that seemed, after all, brightest with promise for their future.

Poor little waifs. One's heart could but echo Mrs. McGuire's motherly wish,—

"Och now, to look at thim childers. If I could only be their own mother to all o' thim!"

But, remembering what their own mothers were in most cases, we thanked God for the great heart of humanity that has gathered these little ones out of their slough of shame and misery, to save them for God and the nation.

But among all the hundreds, no Jamie.

It did seem impossible, as Hugh had said, that anything could escape these nets drawn so tightly by law and charity across the dark streams of city vagrancy. But this poor little waste bit of humanity had slipped past them all, it seemed, and been swallowed up, without a trace, in the hurrying currents of life outside; unless, indeed, Death's surer net had landed him safe in the sweet fields beyond their swelling flood, and, alas, beyond his mother's straining gaze as well.

"But not for much longer," I thought, as we parted from her, on the steps of the very last Refuge on our list --the last refuge of our hope it seemed. Yet I tried to raise the dying spark that seemed likely to take life with it when it went out, and told the fainting heart to be strong, and talked cheerfully of what news might yet come from the police office, and the resources yet within the Doctor's ingenuity.

"She'll be down sick, to-morrow," I said to Hugh, however, as the cab rolled off in which he had sent her home.

"Yes; poor soul," he assented. "I've a call over there to-morrow afternoon,"—he still kept a few patients in our old home—"and I'll try to run in and see her."

We certainly did not expect to see her in the city, and were surprised enough when, as we were sitting at lunch, next day, the familiar message was brought in:

"The little Irish woman is waiting in the office for the Doctor."

I ran in first to see her while Hugh finished his lunch. I almost doubted her sanity, as I met her hungry, restless eyes, and noticed the burning spots under them. As gently as possible, I told her that no word had come to us yet from the police, but she hardly seemed to hear

what I said.

"Didn't you tell me, ma'am, that there'd be some way found yet to get him? An' it's this it is, maybe."

She held out with trembling hand, a dingy, ragged bit of newspaper.

"Well, what is this?" I said, turning it over and over, gingerly, and reading only various advertisements—Houses to let—Board wanted—Use Dr. Killdear's Baby Mixture—ah!—

SEVENTH DAUGHTER OF A SEVENTH Daughter. Grandchild of an Arabian Astrologer. Madame Latour, the well-known Clairvoyant, from Paris, discovers what is lost, reads the past and the future, reveals the destiny, tells name and shows likeness of future husband or wife. Fortunes told by card reading, palmistry, consultation with spirits, or clairvoyance.

Madame Latour is consulted by the first ladies and gentlemen of the city, and never fails to give satisfaction. Gives equal attention to rich and poor. Ladies' hours, 8 to 4; gentlemen's, 5 to 8. Evening seances twice a week, with materialization of spirit forms and faces.

I felt those hungry eyes on my face as I read, and tried to make it impassive.

"Yes, that's it just, ma'am. It was Mrs. McGraw gave it till me when I got home last night. Wasn't she waitin' for me, with the childer all abed, and a hot cup o' tay for me, and when she was afther makin' me drink it, sure she says, 'There's thim as knows where Jamie is,' she says, 'an' can bring him back till ye,' says she, an' she gives me this bit as she'd found in the paper that very day, that come round the tay she'd bought for me, bless her. An' I was that worn out, I went to shlaape like a baby, with it clutched right in me hand, an' I had a drame about Jamie, how he'd come home till

me—an' O ma'am, if you an' the Doether will lend me the money to go to the Madam, I'll work me fingers off, but I'll pay back ivery cent till ye."

Lend her the money ! I knew well enough she meant what she said, and would do it; but to lend her only new disappointment and misery—

I heard Hugh's step,—"Wait a minute," I said, and ran to stop him in the inner office, drawing the door shut after me.

"O Hugh, only look at that. The poor woman really wants to try it."

He read the Madam's alluring announcement. What reply would you expect a "regular" physician to make? Of course--that's just it. He said,

"Nonsense !" and that with some vigor.

I put my hand on his arm.

"Yes, Hugh, but somehow I can't quite go back and tell that poor heart-broken thing so."

"Would you rather raise false hopes, dear, that would only prolong her agony ?"

"The hopes are raised already, Hugh. Besides,"—I went on, arguing as much with myself as with him,—“I do believe she would die, without some sort of hope ; and you know, you give stimulants sometimes, to keep a patient up on false strength till he has a chance to rally. Perhaps this would occupy her mind for a while, and tide her over the worst, and meantime something might turn up, or she might at least get over the dreadful fatigue of these expeditions, and gain a little bit of strength."

"Well," said Hugh, smiling at my medical theories, "there's something in that view of the case. And do you propose to take her to this shrine of the prophets ?"

"Why, yes, Hugh, if you don't mind. That is, un-

less you have some wiser plan to offer," I said, a little artfully, for I was quite sure he hadn't.

"No, there's nothing left that I can see but to wait for some clue from the police, and I've no idea now that it will ever come. These little nobodies are as hard to identify as a stray cat. You may try your treatment, if you like, but let me make sure it's the the best place for you to go to. One may have a choice of oracles, I suppose."

"Oh, Madame Latour; I am pretty sure it's the best there is, Hugh. She's all the fashion. Miss Roye and Mr. Saunders were discussing her last evening at dinner. Miss Roye has been to one of her seances, and says that though she doesn't believe in such things herself, Madame Latour certainly does do most wonderful things that cannot be explained."

"Sensible woman—I mean not to believe altogether in such things. You had better take her with you. I don't like to have you go there alone with Mrs. McGuire. She might go into hysterics, and you would need help. Well, good-bye dear."

"Good-bye, Hugh. I shall have some sort of a story to tell you to-night."

I went back with the comfort of consent to her petition, to poor Mrs. McGuire, feeling, in spite of my plausible arguments, very doubtful whether I was more kind than cruel, and yet that she could not have borne a refusal.

Miss Roye was delighted with my invitation to accompany us to the medium's; poor Mrs. McGuire was beyond minding the presence of a stranger, and at two o'clock we started upon our novel errand.

"I am *so* glad you are going at last to test for yourself some of these phenomena," said Miss Roye,

squeezing my arm she had linked in hers.

"It won't be much of a test," I replied. "I don't feel myself a competent judge. We may see some strange things, but that *we* can't explain them is no sign that they are unexplainable."

"I'm sure I don't know why," said Miss Royce. "We can depend upon the evidence of our own senses, I should hope. When I hear these remarkable stories, I often say, Well, that's too much to credit until I see it myself; but if I do see it, of course I cannot refuse to believe my own eyes."

"You don't believe your own eyes when you go to see Heller's tricks, do you? I asked," laughingly.

"Why, of course not. That's quite different. We know very well that that is only jugglery. He doesn't pretend it is anything else."

"And how do you know that the mediums' 'phenomena' as they call, them are anything but jugglery—simply because they *do* pretend so?" I asked.

"Well, some of the best and loveliest, and most intellectual people believe in spiritualism and clairvoyance, and a great many more than will openly acknowledge it—the faith in it is spreading, I assure you."

"Perhaps so, but my own experience has been this. All the confirmed avowers of such belief I have ever met, naturally divide into two classes; the first, those whose character I cannot have a particle of confidence in, and the second, good, true people, intellectual even, pure in purpose, and honest to the last degree in intention, but notably easily deceived and carried away by their own imagination or credulity. Just watch for yourself and see if it is not so. I mean those who are fully committed to it; of course, there are people of strong judgment and scientific training who are willing to look

into the matter fairly and with interest. I think you said yourself that you feel interested in the phenomena though you do not altogether believe in them," I added, fearing I might perhaps have wounded her a little.

"No—it's so hard to tell what to believe," said Miss Roye, "but," she added impetuously and honestly, "I *do* believe in it a great deal more than I would acknowledge to Mr. Saunders last night. He's so dreadfully matter of fact and sarcastic—he actually had the assurance to declare that not one person in a hundred knows how to tell the truth!"

"He's a lawyer," I said with a smile, "and knows how hard it is to get an exact report of anything from a witness."

"That's what he meant, I suppose, by saying he would like to have the cross-examination of them, when I was telling him what some friends of mine had seen. I thought it was very impertinent. If you're not to believe your eyes or your ears either, I don't know what you are to do!"

"Believe eyes and ears that are trained to expertness in their work, if you can find them," I said, "and use caution and common-sense in coming to your conclusions. Because"—I went on half to myself, for my thoughts were wandering far off—"so very, very much, to so many people, depends upon them."

"'So very much'?" said Miss Roye inquiringly and with a laugh, "and 'to so many people'? I don't flatter myself that my conclusions will make any particular difference to any one else, or to myself either perhaps."

"I beg your pardon," I said, "the time may come when your own life, or the life of some one dearer to you than yourself, will depend upon your faith in science or super-

stition"—I would have said in a scientific physician or a quack, if I hadn't been afraid she might think I was sounding my own physician's trumpet.—“It must make a great difference, to all one's life, I think, whether or no one's habit of mind is to bring every belief to the test of reason and common-sense. If you want wonders, you will have enough left then to feed faith and curiosity for a life-time.

“Do you know what superstition is doing in the world, and how hard it is to root out? That is what makes me hate and dread it, more than anything else. Think of the Sandwich Islands, so given up to it after fifty years contact with civilization and faithful missionary labor, that if one man simply threatens another to have a witch doctor pray him to death, the poor creature crawls home and, ten chances to one, really dies from terror. Why the whole race is dying off the face of the earth, and this superstition is one of the chief recognized causes.”

“Well, you *are* going far off,” said Miss Roye. “It is very dreadful of course, but—”

“There is enough of the same kind of thing nearer home,” I said. “The *Kahuna* of the Sandwich Islands, has his exact counterpart in the Negro conjure doctor of the South. Instead of being prayed to death, the victim is “tricked,” but he dies all the same, with about as much facility as the Kanaka. A physician in a Virginia town, not twenty-four hours from New York, told me that he was sent for by a sick man's wife to visit him, but when he went, the man utterly refused to take any medicine at all, declaring that he knew what ailed him, he was tricked, and nothing would do him any good—he was n't “gwine to fool with no drug doctor's stuff.” So he died a victim to his superstition.

And there was poor old Unele Pete in the same town—

he knew he had a snake in his back; it was put there when he was tricked; of that he was positive, and, before he would follow any physicians directions, his notions had to be yielded to so far as to pretend to take it out. When he felt the little garter snake, the doctor had provided, slip across his back, and saw it held out by the tail squirming, he was perfectly satisfied to do anything else that doctor might direct. You have no idea how wide spread this belief in conjuration is in the South—even the whites in some places are infected with it, but among the negroes, it is found everywhere. Hundreds die miserably or impoverish themselves and their families, who might easily be saved if it were not for their superstition. It will make a vast difference to that race whether it can be rescued from it or not. I have heard that a very similar belief in conjuring spells exists to some extent among the lowest classes of Irish emigrants.

“But, dear me, you needn’t go to one race or class or another for the only example, or look outside our own circle of acquaintance, for that matter. How many successive quacks and patent medicines, each one the only cure in the world for every thing, do you imagine our friend Mrs. Clement has tried for her chronic dyspepsia?”

“She told me yesterday, that she was going to send a lock of her hair to a wonderful new clairvoyant physician in Chicago,” said Miss Roye with a laugh. for Mrs. Clement’s peculiarities were well known to her acquaintances.

“She’d better send him a brick off her house chimney to tell what ails the steam pipes,” I replied—“or scratch a little gilding off the clock case to send him, instead of sending the clock to a clock-mender. That would be a fair experiment, with less risk to herself. But I’m certain it is not the first lock she has sacrificed. One would

think that after one lock has pronounced her illness liver complaint, and another heart disease, and another lung trouble, and another spinal affliction, she would not have faith left in a hair of her head. But, as I said, it is wonderful how hard superstition is to die, and, as *you* said, it is surprising to see in what otherwise intelligent people you will find it. It is more a question of mental balance than of mental growth in any special direction I think. The most curiously superstitious person I ever knew personally was a lovely young lady, not highly intellectual, but bright, from Boston. Think of it—the Hub itself, the American Athens, the home of pure reason and calm philosophy! The dear girl has gone to where all earth shadows flee away, though real wonders enough are left which the angels desire to look into. What must she think of her bondage here? For it was a bondage. She would cry all day over a broken looking glass, because it was ‘sure to bring death.’ I was thrown into company with her party in travelling. We spent a few days together in a cottage in the Tyrol. She shrieked herself nearly into hysterics one day, because a little bird flew into the window, and she sprang on to the top of her Saratoga trunk to avoid the brush of its wing. That too was to her a sign of death. I could only comfort her by telling her what is true, that the German peasants think it a good omen when a swallow flies into the cottage. She would never begin anything on a Friday, or take a certain garment into a neighbor’s house or room to make, lest it should never be finished. Her mind was as full of signs as a dream book. I don’t know her history, probably some peculiarity of early surroundings or education might account for it. I used rather mischievously, but partly to show her the folly of it, to test her credulity sometimes, by inventing new signs and asking

her if she knew them. I never could make one too ridiculous for her to accept it without question until I explained. Then she would good naturedly scold me, but I don't know that her faith was shaken in the old ones.

Now "suppose"—as the baker's daughter said—that that girl had come to be entrusted with the bringing up of a family of children—would it have made no difference? But—stop the car, conductor—Here we are at Madam Latour's."

Poor little Mrs. McGuire started from the apathy in which she had taken little heed to what was said, and caught my arm, trembling from head to foot. I whispered a word of encouragement, as we crossed the street and mounted the steps of a brick house. My light touch of the bell was answered instantly, and the door was thrown open by a respectable looking colored waiter. Yes, the Madam was at home, to ladies, and we were ushered into a reception room to wait till she was at liberty.

A French nurse with a daintily dressed little girl, was preparing to leave, with a pair of flushed cheeks that a walk in the park might cool, but I wondered how the "little pitcher" could be prevented from pouring out a story of the visit to Mamma when they got home.* In twenty minutes more, which seemed twice as long, two women draped in the deepest mourning passed slowly by the door and went out, the elder supporting the younger who was weeping violently under her long crape veil.

We were then at once summoned into an inner parlor,

*This incident is not fiction, and it may suggest to mothers who send their little ones out to walk with nurses they do not know fully, that it would be well sometimes to make sure where they take them.

larger and darker, empty of any human presence, and not suggestive of spiritual occupancy. It had only the ordinary scanty furniture of any unfashionable, city rented house. One tall, narrow mirror with marble slab under it on brackets, reflecting nothing but a somewhat worn tapestry Brussels carpet, two small sofas upholstered in crimson brocatelle, half a dozen chairs ditto; a white marble mantel-piece with French china vases and showy French clock, whose enamored shepherd and shepherdess had entirely forgotten to mark the lapse of time; a cold hearth under it rather untidy with scattered wisps of paper; a scratched square piano without a cover, and an old fashioned centre-table with one of some crimson stuff like the curtains, like them too, somewhat dingy and faded. I glanced round the room at these details, and even took a quick peep under the table cover, but found no signs of any juggler's apparatus; no hidden wires or electric bells revealed themselves to my superficial search.

A door opposite the mirror opened quietly, and the seventh grand-daughter of the Arabian astrologer stood before us. A tall, stout woman with masses of black hair puffed and piled high upon her head, in the style then prevailing on fashion plates, a face that would have been simply coarsely expressionless, but for a pair of quick, searching black eyes. If they looked as sharply into futurity as they did around them, they ought to have seen much. They rested a scarcely appreciable moment on each one of us, though, somehow, when it was my turn, I felt transfixed.

"Do you come to consult me, ladies?"

Her accent did not suggest the Arabian astrologer, nor the Parisian extraction, and my courage rose, while I briefly explained that it was only I who wished the con-

sultation.

"But it's *you* that's in trouble," retorted the Madam, turning suddenly upon Mrs. McGuire, who, startled completely off her guard, clasped her hands convulsively and sobbed out:

"An' sure that's thrue for ye, ma'am. An' if ye'll help me out, it's the Lord himself will bliss ye."

"You have met with a loss," said the Madam, calmly, seating herself at the table. "You have come to the right place for help. Now"—addressing me—"will you consult by the cards, or the spirits, or clairvoyance?"

I hesitated.

"An' which wan o' thim ways is the best thin?" asked Mrs. McGuire, appealing to the oracle herself.

"All are equally sure, and perfectly satisfactory as far as they go. Of course, you can't do as much with cards."

"*Spirits*," motioned Miss Roye's lips behind her hand.

"The only trouble in consulting the spirits," said the Madam, as if answering an audible suggestion, "is that you can't always be sure they are not lying spirits. In clairvoyance, I tell only what I see myself, so I know it is reliable."

This argument seemed satisfactory to Mrs. McGuire, and Miss Roye remarked aloud:

"Madam Latour has great reputation as a clairvoyant."

So the question was settled.

"Please draw up to the table," said Madam Latour, handing me a long strip of thin brown wrapping paper, "and write upon this, the name of the lost. You will observe that I shall not look at it, but you can make the test as perfect as you please by covering your writing,

and when it is written, double the paper over and over till it is a mere strip."

I took the paper with a feeling that it was all a child's game, and I had to consider what the consequences were and what the world would say. The Madam turned her keen eyes religiously away, and, screening one hand with the other, in small faint characters, I wrote the name, Jamie McGuire, at the top of my paper, folding it over and over, as she had said, giving the strip thus formed an extra fold across. It was no sooner done than the Madam extended her hand, without a word, and without turning her eyes which seemed to be closed, her head resting upon her other hand, her elbow supported by the back of her chair. I dropped the folded slip into her open palm, her fingers closed upon it, and—still without her head's turning—went through a series of manipulations with no effect that I could see, but to crush and twist the slip more and more hopelessly for any examination, at last giving it a careless toss over her head into the fireplace, where it lay with the other wisps and explained their presence.

Her arm, returning, sank listlessly on the table; her head drooped lower: she seemed to have dropped asleep with the facility of the fat boy in *Pickwick*. In a few minutes, however, her breast began to heave and pant as if she were struggling under some mysterious influence. "Is it not awe inspiring?" murmured Miss Roye, under her breath, nervously drawing her chair a little nearer mine. Mrs. McGuire took a more matter-of-fact view of the case.

"Och, what shall we do at all, at all? Sure the poor creature is goin' into a fit."

The convulsive gasps ceased, and in dreamy, slow utterance, with eyes still closed, our oracle began to speak.

"Where—am—I? I see many people hurrying about. They have shawls and travelling bags. It is night—I see a bright, bright light. It is a locomotive. A cab is driving up fast. A man and a woman with a boy between them have got out and are running. The bell is ringing. They have got on board. Now the cars are going—Sh—sh—sh—sh—sh—sh—sh—

It is all dark now, I can't see anything.

"Oh, now I see water—a wide, wide river—many boats—a steamboat landing. More people—so many people—Some going on board—some coming ashore. On the left hand carriages waiting—on the right hand an eating house with a flag-staff in front of it. It is night again, very dark. There is a tar bucket on fire for a torch. The burning tar is dripping. A boy is watching it. He is the same boy I saw before on the train. And the same woman has hold of his hand. His other hand is in his pocket. He has a soft hat on his head. I can't see his face, his back is toward me. Now the man that was with them on the train, comes up and speaks to the woman, and they all go aboard."

"An' what sort of a little b'y will it be that ye see, ma'am?" burst in the poor little mother, unable to bear the suspense in quiet.

Unheeding the interruption, the seer continued after a pause, as if she had heard nothing that was said:

"It is growing light to me. Snow—snow—snow—stretching everywhere as far as I can see; and long black lines running straight through it. They are railroad tracks. No hills, all flat like fields or like the sea. Far off I see something moving—like a lot of animals running. Now I see a few houses in a line along the track. A little fur-

ther off, I see a large log house. A man is working outside. The sides of the house are growing like glass to me. I can see right through into the room. It is a pleasant looking room—like a kitchen—warm and bright. An open fireplace, and a coal fire. A woman is clearing off the table. A baby is in a cradle. In front of the fire a little boy is sitting, mending a sled. He is a small boy with dark brown hair and red cheeks. Now the woman is speaking. What is she saying? Be still now, and let me listen. She says:

“ ‘ You’ll go to school to-day, *Jamie McGuire*. ’ ”

A faint scream from the over-taxed little mother started Miss Roye and myself to our feet. What other sentences the clairvoyant may have spoken, if any, we did not heed or hear, as we caught the poor fainting woman and laid her on a sofa. She did not lie there long. How Madam Latour came out of her trance we did not notice; but she rose from her chair, exclaiming—

“ Where am I? Oh—what have I been saying? What is the matter?”

The fainting mother heard her, and, rousing, in a frenzy of excitement, was down at her feet on her knees.

“ O dear lady, tell me where is that where Jamie is, an’ how I can get to him! ”

“ I don’t know what you mean. What have I told you? Tell me what I have said. ”

It was some time before Mrs. McGuire could take in the idea that the wonderful Madam could see less with eyes open than with eyes shut, and then it was a bitter disappointment which none of her suggestions could relieve, especially as she utterly refused to dream again for us that evening.

“ Now, why not be satisfied? ” urged the Madam.
“ From what you say I told you, your boy seems to be

well taken care of, better off than at home, may be. No; I can't tell where the place is exactly, but may be I can see it again some time when I'm rested from this effort.

"It's somewhere out west, I should say. I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll shuffle the cards for you without extra charge. I wouldn't do it for every body, but you interest me."

A pack of cards which had seen service was produced from the Madam's pocket, and Mrs. McGuire looked on with awe and nervous expectancy at the mysterious process of reading them.

"You have had great trouble in more ways than one."

"That's thrue for you," sighed Mrs. McGuire.

"Your last trouble comes from the western quarter. I thought so. There is some one mixed up in your life who is doing you mischief."

Mrs. McGuire looked awe struck.

"A fair haired woman."

Her face fell in doubt.

"She is near to you. It is one of your husband's relations. Beware of her. It is her has carried off your boy."

"Has your husband any relations out West?" I asked.

"Sure, niver a wan, that I knows on—He might, though—" she replied, evidently unwilling to give up the clue.

"Yes; that's it. She did it to spite you. She's your worst enemy—a snake in the grass. But she's good to your boy now she's got him. Very likely she will send him back some day, or he'll come back himself when he grows up. You'd better be content with that. That's all I can tell you."

What mother's heart would be content with that?

"An' couldn't ye," she pleaded, "find out the name

of that far place, an' let me go there for him—or maybe you could get thim cratures to send him back till me?"

"Oh, yes; I could go to them—in the spirit, you know—and influence their minds to send him back, so they couldn't help themselves—they'd have to do just as I willed. Nobody can resist me when I exert my full power. Why, I've sent my will across the Atlantic ocean, and controlled people thousands of miles away, so they couldn't help themselves."

"Oh then, please do it now, wont you, for the love of Heaven!" begged the mother.

"Well, I've almost given up such efforts. It is a great exertion, a great strain upon my nervous system," sighed the Madam, comfortably settling herself back in her chair, and looking as if she had not a strained nerve in her body. "Now I see that you are a poor woman," she added, benevolently, "and you had better save your money for yourself, as long as Jamie is so well off. For it would take a great deal to bring him back."

"How much, then?" broke in the mother.

"Put it as low as I could, for you—it's really a dangerous exertion for me. Put it as low as I could, because I know you're poor, I couldn't in conscience, ask less than twenty dollars."

"I could work an' get it, yes, I could, if you'd only be so good as to wait for it, or let me pay up a bit at a time. I'd pay you ivery cint, that I would, an' bless you too, ma'am."

My impatience rose over its bounds, the more because I was angry with myself for having brought myself and the poor little woman into such a position. "Come, Mrs. McGuire," I said, "you had better go home and think this over. Madam Latour will trust you if you decide to come to her. I'm sure we can make that all

right, or perhaps she can get you the name of the Western town. You shall have all the help you can, you may trust me for that. But you had better come home now."

"Yes, oh yes," assented the Madam, her keen eyes resting on me with a questioning, and on the whole satisfied look. "You can trust the lady, and I will satisfy you. Come again, and we'll see what we can do."

Confiding in me, the poor little woman consented to leave with the small drop of comfort she had had. It was stimulating enough, at all events—I was afraid only too much so.

"Can you change this bill?" I asked the Madam, in settling her account.

"Oh yes, I can change anything. See the dollars—see the silver and gold!—" said the Madam, in a strangely confidential mood, drawing from her pocket's depths an overflowing pocket-book that proved her fully ready for resumption of specie payment.

"That has all come in to-day. I shall have as much again before I go to bed. That shows what the people think of me, doesn't it?" and the keen eyes twinkled with satisfaction.

"What kind of people come to you most?" I asked.

"Oh, every kind—rich and poor, high and low; people that have lost treasures—money or jewels, or friends by death or other ways; girls whose lovers have left them, for me to bring them back. It's a good business. I tell you what, Miss," she exclaimed turning to Miss Royce, "you look as if you could be a medium."

"People have told me so before," said Miss Royce, looking impressed and pleased.

"Yes, you do, and if ever you want to become one, I can teach you—for a consideration of course—for a consideration. There's great science in it. I paid

twelve hundred dollars myself to learn it."

"Oh I thought it was a natural gift," I said, suspiciously.

"Of course it is. If I hadn't been the seventh daughter of a seventh daughter with wonderful signs at my birth, born under a fortunate star, and the great grand-daughter of an Arabian astrologer, I never could have had the powers I have, but there's science in it besides, the real white magic, and I could impart it to this lady I think, but not to you."

"I'm afraid not to me," I assented. "Come Mrs. McGuire," and we took our leave of the Madam.

My story for Hugh that evening, after Mrs. McGuire had had her dinner and gone home, was not as bright and triumphant as I meant it to be. I was ready to give up all my theories of treatment, and very much afraid I had killed my patient with an overdose of stimulants.

"Twenty dollars indeed—and *possibly* she can tell the name of the place by another *effort*—why Hugh, that's only the beginning of a series of extortions. And yet, the poor woman will die, if she gives it up now. Is there any way out of it all?"

If there was, I knew Hugh would find it.

"Well, cheer up, dear; we did the very best we knew," he said, kindly taking a share of the responsibility. "I'll tell you how we can use up some time at least. The settlements along the Pacific Road are not innumerable. We can find out every one, and send a note to the postmaster or station-keeper, and inquire if any such family with such a child lives there."

"And if you find there does," said Miss Roye impressively, "perhaps you'll be willing to acknowledge that there is truth in clairvoyance, though we may not be able to explain it."

"Well we'll wait till then," said Hugh, laughing, "and

I advise you to wait before you pay your twelve hundred dollars."

For all Hugh's generosity and ingenious devices, I lay awake most of the night, thinking over the difficulties of the case, pitying the weary mother, indignant with the woman who, I believed, was deceiving her, and feeling with shame a sense of having assisted the fraud. I went to breakfast next morning with a nervous headache which received a sudden impetus when the office bell rang, and the old message was brought in:

"The little Irish woman to see you, ma'am, and the Doctor."

"The woman really imposes upon you," remarked some one at the table who had heard her story. The unsympathetic speech gave me strength to rise. "Oh, no!" I said.

"We'll go together," said Hugh, and so we did.

Was she really insane this time? I thought so when we opened the office door. She looked ready to spring at us. Her eyes were almost black with excitement. Her cheeks burned. She was quivering all over, laughing hysterically between sobs, and then the tears streamed forth as I had never seen them in her darkest days, as she clapped her hands and exclaimed:

"O Doctor dear—O ma'am! Blessed be God! He's found! Jamie's found!"

"Thank God!" we both exclaimed.

"But where—how—out West?" I stammered, hardly knowing what to think. The mere suggestion calmed her.

"Ah, ma'am, sure the Lord was better to me than that false desayvin' crature—though it's too happy I am, to be angry with ony one now. Wasn't I goin' home last night ready to pay her ivery cent I had in the world, and believe ivery word of her foolishness, an' didn't I find, right there in me own house, a bit of a letter waitin' for me, just like an angel had brought the same, an' it right from that blessed man Mr. Christian himself—him as kapes the

Shepherd's Fold, ye know, sir—sure it's Christian he is by name, and Christian by nature. Mary Ellen an' me made it out together, an' it sayin', how four weeks ago, only just a bit afther we'd wint there, you know, ma'am, a poor little b'y was brought in by a news-girl who had found him sick in the streets, an' he come right down with the faver, an' couldn't say a word. An' when he got better, he gave his name as Johnnie Mellin, don't you see, an' said he hadn't any home, an' they kep' him in the school, an' took care of him. But his tacher found him cryin' ivery day, do you see, ma'am; cryin' an' cryin'; an' wouldn't play with the other b'ys; an' he wouldn't tell wan o' them what the matter was, till, at last, they were so kind he lost fear of them, an' owned up his name wasn't Johnnie Mellin, but Jamie McGuire, an' he had a mother just over the river, only he was afraid to go home because they thought he'd run away. An' so Mr. Christian said I'd best come over an' see him first, instead of his sendin' him home."

"*Thought* he'd run away? But hadn't he?"

"That's just what I don't understand yet, ma'am; for, don't you see, when you'd been so good helpin' me an' upholdin' me, sure I couldn't do onything till I'd come an' towld ye."

If, as has been said, "gratitude is the test of a truly noble nature," did not this poor little Irish woman prove a claim to nobility by a delicacy of feeling which kept her back even from the culmination of her joy till the friends who had mourned with her could also rejoice with her?

And so, within an hour, we had the pleasure which any one might think a rich one, of seeing that mother heart clasp to its closest embrace the little brown head so long missed, that poor little waif taken up into the warmth and tenderness of a mother's love, that love satisfied for all the long days of cruel pain.

And this, perhaps, would be a good place to stop; but I know you will want, as we did, to listen to Jamie's poor

little story, and learn how it was that "they thought he'd run away," and he thought he hadn't.

"And oh, I'm so sorry, mother," he sobbed, "and sure I never meant to leave you. But after I'd got the soap, and went out of the store, there was Pat O'Brien, and Tim Rooney, and Johnnie Sullivan, and we got playin' and cuttin' up, and I left down the soap somewhere, and it went just clean out of my head. And we went down to the docks to play, and jumped on a canal boat a lyin' there, and before ever we knew, there she was out in the middle of the stream, and an old tug takin' her down to the locks. Oh, wasn't we scared, though! And the captain he ^{saw} at us; but when we got to the locks, he ^{saw} the boys off. But it was an awful ways from home, and I was afraid to go back so late, and without the soap or the money. So I begged the captain to let me stay on board and work, and I told him that my father and mother was dead, and there wasn't nobody to say I shouldn't—I didn't know how awful mean that was till Mr. Christian told me—and so, at last, he said I might, and so I went all the way down into Pennsylvania with the boat, down among the coal mines. Sometimes the boys let me ride the horses. That was bully. Only, sometimes, they knocked me about too. When we got down there, I went ashore, and hired out to a farmer to do the chores; pick beans, and help make hay a little. I liked it pretty well, and he was good to me. But in the fall, the same boat started up on its last trip, so I thought I'd had about enough of farming, and the captain said he'd take me back. But when we got up here, I got the old scare back again, and dursn't go home. So I tried to make a living off the streets, but I had bad luck and took sick, and thought I was going to peg out; but a girl they call Shouting Sallie found me and brought me here. And you know how they got it out of me who I was—I'm awful glad they did—and I'll never run away again—which I didn't that time neither—if you'll make

father not beat me. And I'll work, and pay you back that six cents for the soap I didn't fetch you. Mr. Christian says it's the square thing to do, and I expect it is. And I told the fellers here I was an orphan—but I'm awful glad I aint. That's all."

It is a true story I have been telling you. So Jamie was found, and we might say with him, that's all. But will you not think for a minute who found Jamie?

It was not the seventh daughter of the seventh daughter, the grandchild of the Arabian astrologer, the most popular medium of the day, with all her gifts, natural and acquired, and eyes that saw what was not to be seen; the oracle at whose shrine hundreds waited with awe and left their gold and silver behind, the "false, deceiving creature," chuckling over human credulity and her ill-gotten gains.

Not she; but the ministers of true and noble and rational charity which—not for gold or gain—seeks by systematic, common-sense effort, to make up for some of the world's sin and folly; half of whose battle would be won, if the superstitions spun by ignorance could be swept, like dusty cobwebs, from the houses of rich and poor.

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At a meeting of the Executive Committee of the American Social Science Association, held June 8th, 1878, Prof. Pierce in the chair, it was unanimously voted, as follows :

Resolved, That the American Social Science Association learns with pleasure of the work undertaken at Hampton, in Virginia, to spread among the people of Virginia, and of the South in general, a knowledge of Sanitary Science popularly set forth ; and that from an examination of the three Sanitary Tracts of the proposed series, viz.: *The Health Laws of Moses, The Duty of Teachers, and Preventable Diseases*, the Executive Committee of this Association is persuaded that the important work, thus undertaken, will be well performed. We would therefore commend these Tracts to all readers, at the North as well as at the South, and would recommend their wide distribution in the way best suited to promote the circulation of them.

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